

Application No. 10/663,979

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Art Unit: 3714

MAY 27 2008

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

5 **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-28 (Previously Cancelled).

10 Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting with a plurality of columns, with the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising:

- a) a player making a wager to play the game;
- b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- c) displaying the rearranged symbols in the symbol matrix;
- 15 d) automatically expanding wildcard symbols, if displayed in the symbol matrix, such that each said wildcard symbol: ~~in all of the predetermined directions assigned by the directional indicia displayed on each said wildcard symbol~~
 - (1) expands by simultaneously occupying two or more positions in the symbol matrix; and
 - (2) expands in all of the predetermined directions assigned by the directional
 - 20 indicia displayed on said wildcard symbol;
- e) always replacing the symbol(s) in the path of an expanding wildcard symbol with the expanding wildcard symbol; and

Application No. 10/663,979

Art Unit: 3714

- f) evaluating winning symbol combinations formed using expanded wildcard symbols wherein each said wildcard symbol may act as any other symbol in order to form a winning symbol combination; and
- f)g) issuing awards for winning symbol combinations following the expansion of all
- 5 wildcard symbols.

Claim 30 (Previously presented): The method of Claim 29 in which the directional indicia for a wildcard symbol assigns one or more of the following predetermined directions:

- 10 a) upwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- b) downwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- c) leftwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- d) rightwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears; or
- e) diagonally from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears.

15 Claim 31 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 32 (Previously presented): The method of Claim 29 in which letters or words are used as directional indicia displayed on the wildcard symbols.

20 Claim 33 (Previously Cancelled)